

a   d e s c r i p t i o n  
of the  
IBONBOUND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

in consideration of our  
application to become a  
NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Introduction

In many ways the Ironbound Community School is and always has been a "public" school. The school along with the rest of the Ironbound Community Learning Center has always served the community in which it is located without charging any tuition and by enrolling children of all races, creeds and national origins on a first-come, first-served basis. The "Center" is composed of the Community School along with Day Care, After-School and Summer Programs serving more than 200 children. Shortly after it's creation by a group of neighborhood residents, parents, and teachers, the Center was adopted by the New Jersey State Department of Education as a model education project. It is a model of extensive parent participation as well as the open classroom approach to learning. The many skilled staff and parents provide a valuable training resource to Newark and the surrounding area.

One only has to walk through the doors to see that the Community School is no ordinary place. One is struck first, and probably most importantly by the atmosphere of living. At any one moment a visitor can see individual children of all ages reading or writing, along, in groups, or with a parent volunteer. The visitor can see a group of children learning to add using cuisinaire rods, or see a group of children learning to measure, and recording the results in their own math books, or see older children doing computations in bases other than base 10. A visitor can see children working on a science project they have chosen; a class meeting occurring at which teachers and students discuss the class and event, choose "sign-up" activities or work out a question of rules and discipline.

Although we feel that we have taken into account the need to alter some of our procedures to assure compatible working relationships with other schools and the Board, we also urge the Board to accept some departures from the norm of Newark's schools. We are encouraged in this request by the public recognition of Board Members that some practices and procedures in Newark schools need to be strengthened or changed. After all, the strength of the Ironbound Community School partially rests in its departures from the norms of other urban schools. We look forward to joining the Board in our shared responsibility of providing the best possible education for the children of Newark, and support to teachers and parents.